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SUGGESTIONS FOR A BRUCELLOSIS ERADICATION PROGRAM

Ideas That Have Worked



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Federal Extension Service
in cooperation with
Agricultural Research Service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREWORD

This is a blueprint for organizing and supporting a bovine brucellosis eradication program on a local or area basis. It is made up of methods now being used successfully in various parts of the country. All the suggestions will not apply in every county or in every State. For instance, brucellosis eradication in range areas presents markedly different problems from those in dairy areas. These suggestions, intended as a guide for State and local programs, can be followed when practical, or may lead to other ideas that would better fit specific needs.

Information in this manual was supplied by various States and cooperatively compiled by the Federal Extension Service and the Agricultural Research Service at the request of the National Brucellosis Committee. The compilation was reviewed by the National Brucellosis Subcommittee on Education and Information.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A BRUCELLOSIS ERADICATION PROGRAM

A successful brucellosis eradication program depends largely on two factors: Education and organization.

Some States have been carrying out a successful program for many years, while others are just getting started. Nine States--Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have been declared modified certified brucellosis-free areas. Such differences in progress mean that the States may need to apply the principles of education and organization in different ways. But those basic principles are largely the same at whatever stage the job of eradication may be.

Education is the tool to gain understanding and participation by livestock owners and others concerned in the program. Before the eradication campaign begins in any area, the people affected should know (1) The nature of the disease and its economic importance, (2) what the eradication program is, (3) what its objectives are, (4) how it can help them and their community, and (5) how and when they can participate.

At this first stage, concentrated educational programs should be beamed primarily to those areas in which eradication campaign measures are to be readily available. If livestock owners demand more action than the program can provide, they may become dissatisfied and refuse to cooperate.

After the program is started, continuing education is needed to hold the support of the community in carrying out the necessary program measures until the area is modified certified brucellosis-free and then--most important of all--until BRUCELLOSIS IS WIPED OUT.

During the long-term period, if the same story is repeated over and over again, lethargy and loss of interest may result. A frequent change in educational approach is needed to bring fresh ideas and information into the fight to hold the ground gained and to destroy the last hard core of infection.

Organization is the means of coordinating education and action. Good organization provides the means for making the best use of facilities and personnel in putting program measures to work.

The specific recommendations in this manual are based on what is actually being done to coordinate education and action in States where well-organized brucellosis eradication campaigns are being conducted.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The Federal-State bovine brucellosis eradication program has been in operation since 1934, and a special drive to accelerate eradication measures was started in September 1954. All 48 States and 2 Territories have signed cooperative agreements to work with the United States Department of Agriculture in getting the job done.

The national program is based on the following measures: (1) Testing cattle to locate brucellosis infection (by the brucellosis ring test (BRT) and the blood agglutination test); (2) disposing of reactors as rapidly as possible; (3) vaccinating

calves to help build up immunity to infection; (4) encouraging sanitary herd management practices; (5) certifying herds brucellosis-free and declaring areas modified certified brucellosis-free (no more than 1 percent of the cattle and 5 percent of the herds infected); and (6) continuing tests to locate and eradicate the last remaining infection until the entire Nation is brucellosis-free.

The State government, usually represented by the State veterinarian, confers with the Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, represented by the Federal veterinarian-in charge, in deciding upon specific measures to be carried out in this program.

The campaign within any State is conducted under the State laws. Therefore, some variation is provided for under the official program of eradication procedure. Some States enact new laws or amend existing legislation to provide necessary authority to carry out the program preferred by State officials and livestock owners.

Funds are provided by State and Federal Governments. Indemnities for animals slaughtered under the official program may be paid jointly by State and Federal funds, or only the Federal portion of the indemnity may be paid. No indemnity is paid unless approved by the State concerned.

GETTING TO WORK

After specific program measures have been determined, two approaches have been most often used in organizing successful campaigns. One is to organize a State brucellosis committee to plan the area approach throughout the State. In the other, State livestock sanitary officials and the Federal veterinarian organize county brucellosis committees, which are then represented on the State brucellosis committee.

1. If the State committee is appointed first, membership is usually selected from such representative groups as--

Farm organizations.

Dairy, beef, swine, and other livestock producer and marketing associations.

Rural women's organizations.

Public health department.

State medical association.

Farm press and radio.

Other interested groups.

The State and Federal veterinarians, State extension service, land-grant college teaching and research staff, practicing veterinarians, and vocational agriculture teachers usually do not serve on the committee, but act as advisory members for State and county committees.

Once in operation, the State Committee sets up a plan of organizing the educational program and action measures in a logical county sequence. A State subcommittee on education and information within the State brucellosis committee can help to coordinate the timing of educational and action programs.

2. If county committees are organized first, State livestock sanitary officials and the Federal veterinarian usually take the initiative in setting up the leadership. Meetings are held to discuss the program with State farm organizations, the State extension service, livestock producer and marketing associations, and other interested groups. Through the statewide leadership set up in such meetings, counties are organized for area eradication programs. County committees are formed, and each selects a representative to serve on the State brucellosis committee.

In some States the State and county committees are called animal health committees and help to support and direct eradication efforts against all major livestock diseases. In this way it is believed easier to attract the interest and enlist the cooperation of larger groups of livestock owners.

Regardless of the approach used or the name of the committees, the method of county organization is largely the same.

ORGANIZING A COUNTY

The county agricultural extension agent usually helps to organize the initial effort and calls on county leaders to put the program into action. He communicates with farmers and others concerned in the community through regular meetings, informal visits, direct mailing, newspaper columns, and radio or television appearances. Through these channels the initial contacts can be used to explain general facts about the program and the disease. After the program is organized, it is usually directed by the livestock producers of the area.

Additional means, such as the following, can be used at this time to present necessary information before the community is asked to decide whether to take part in the program:

1. Planning sessions with the leaders representing farm, ranch, dairy, and other livestock groups in the county.

2. A meeting with all practicing veterinarians in the area to explain the program and what part they can play in carrying out the measures. Then, as veterinarians conduct their daily practice, they can give informed answers to the questions of livestock owners. State, Federal, and district veterinarians should attend such meetings with practicing veterinarians.

3. Special briefing of workers in the county extension service office, including home demonstration agents, and workers in county offices of other agricultural agencies. When the county workers have been given the facts, they are in a position to discuss the program with livestock owners during regular communications with them.

4. Special articles in county papers, including progress reports of the program in other parts of the State, illustrated with maps and charts.

5. Interviews with program officials for broadcast over local radio and television stations.

CALLING AN ORGANIZATION MEETING

After sufficient time has been given for providing basic information, a county-wide or local meeting of representative owners should be called by either the county agent or a supporting farm organization--or both. Special invitations could be extended to those livestock owners known to be reluctant to support the program.

The agenda for a typical meeting would be as follows:

1. Remarks by the county agent or representative of the organization calling the meeting and introduction of State and Federal veterinarians.
2. The extension, State, or Federal veterinarian--perhaps all three--briefly discusses the nature of brucellosis and the National and State eradication programs.
3. Showing of the film, Triple Threat of Brucellosis, or a later film if available.
4. The extension, State, or Federal veterinarian explains how the program would operate in the county or other local area, including the procedure necessary to start a program and to work for status as a modified certified brucellosis-free area.
5. Question-and-answer period.
6. Determine the opinion of the group on whether the livestock industry of the area will support an organized eradication program.
7. Select volunteers for soliciting cooperation throughout the area.
8. Select a county brucellosis committee through group discussion. The committee may include members from the following representative groups or other interested groups.

Beef, dairy, and swine herd owners.

County farm organizations.

Recognized rural community leaders.

Urban civic groups.

County health office.

Farm press and radio.

As on the State committee, the county agent, home demonstration agent, practicing veterinarian, and vocational agriculture teachers, usually serve in an advisory capacity.

In States where a certain percentage of livestock owners must sign petitions asking for an area brucellosis eradication program, the persons circulating petitions should be supplied with all the information and written material necessary to answer questions of livestock owners.

LINING UP SUPPORT

At this stage of a campaign the major emphasis of the education and information program in the county should be placed on why it pays to participate in the brucellosis eradication program. Additional aid can be obtained from such groups as the following:

1. Banks and other business groups of the county can help to emphasize the economic importance of having the area certified in order that its livestock can be shipped without the restrictions placed by some States against such movements from noncertified areas.

2. Public health groups can help to explain the importance of protecting the health of farm families, who are most frequently exposed to infection.

3. Veterinarians and State research workers can provide scientific assurance that methods of testing, vaccination, and other program measures are effective in eradicating brucellosis.

CALLING FOLLOWUP MEETINGS

If the initial meetings did not support the eradication program, or if the necessary number of livestock owners are slow in signing the petition, other meetings can be held to provide additional information, including reports of progress being made in other counties and States. Endorsements of the program from individual herd owners are helpful in such meetings.

In large, heavily populated counties, it may be advisable to hold several community meetings--in such subdivisions as school districts or townships--just before program measures are to be made available.

ORGANIZING COUNTY PROGRAM MEASURES

When the program is ready to start in a county or other local area, full information should be made available about the "when, where, and how" of each eradication measure.

1. Practicing veterinarians should be given written instructions on how they can cooperate with the program and what they are expected to do. They should be kept informed of current progress in the county.

2. Every herd owner should have a written notice that the county is working toward a specific brucellosis eradication goal and a statement of what he is expected to do. If State or local health laws include deadlines for brucellosis eradication in herds producing milk for human consumption, dairymen should be so informed and reminded.

3. Every herd owner should be informed of the availability of tests and vaccination, and if possible, given a chance to specify a date when he would like a veterinarian to call. These requests should be adhered to as strictly as possible in

making schedules for testing or vaccinating, herd by herd. If it is not possible to permit the owner to specify a preferred veterinarian and time for testing or vaccination, schedules can be arranged for veterinarians, making best use of their time and travel, and owners informed of the schedule well in advance.

4. If a mobile laboratory unit is used in making brucellosis ring tests, wide publicity may be given about "when and where" it will be located in the area, through press, radio spot announcements and programs, direct mailing, announcements at meetings, and in other ways.

5. Followup notices should be mailed as soon as possible to give each owner the results of his test and any necessary instructions about further action to be taken.

6. Placards or other suitable recognition can be provided for owners whose herds have been certified brucellosis-free.

7. Work should be organized to provide for retesting each area at proper intervals. Education and information programs should be carefully coordinated to make sure that personnel and facilities for retests will be ready when needed. A community that understands the value of retesting can lose interest in an entire eradication program if the means for carrying it out are not provided.

SUPPORTING COUNTY PROGRAM MEASURES

Education and information releases in support of program measures, to be released through county papers and local television and radio stations, should emphasize the following:

1. Local success stories, giving names and facts, about herd owners who have wiped out brucellosis and what it has meant to them.

2. The importance of disposing of reactors. Tests locate infection so that it can be wiped out. The job is not complete until the disease is gone from the area.

3. In range areas, the value of official vaccination in building up immunity as a step toward eradication.

4. The importance of proper sanitary measures in conjunction with official calf vaccination, testing, and disposal of reactors. Day-to-day herd management is the key to disease prevention.

5. Periodic progress reports to help keep the community informed and interested.

CERTIFYING AN AREA

When a county or other area has achieved the status of modified certified brucellosis-free, it might be appropriate to take the opportunity of congratulating herd owners and other cooperating groups through official ceremonies at a county meeting. This is a good time to stress the importance of continued retesting and elimination of remaining reactors until brucellosis is wiped out.

Special emphasis can be given, in continuing educational programs, to proper management and practices to keep herds brucellosis free once the disease is eradicated.

SUPPORTING THE STATEWIDE PROGRAM

The statewide program is administered through the joint offices of State and Federal veterinarians.

The State brucellosis committee continues to support the effort in the following ways:

1. Review the progress being made throughout the State and make recommendations for strengthening the program in areas where more emphasis is needed.
2. Work closely with the Extension Service in planning a statewide educational program and advise about the areas of the State and the measures of the program on which more educational efforts are needed.
3. Work closely with county brucellosis committees and help to guide their efforts in line with the uniform program throughout the State.
4. Advise with State director of agriculture; farm organizations; dairy, beef, swine, and other livestock producer and marketing associations; and other State leaders to encourage needed improvements in the program.
5. Issue leaflets and other information materials when considered advisable.

The State agricultural extension service usually works closely with State and Federal veterinarians and the State brucellosis committee in carrying out the statewide educational program. Extension usually provides such information material as the following:

1. Printed leaflets and bulletins.
2. Slide films.
3. Posters.
4. Exhibits for use at fairs and public meetings.
5. Press releases for State papers and fill-in releases for use in the counties.
6. Printed envelope stuffers for use in counties in direct mailing.
7. State maps showing progress of the program for periodic release to State papers and wire services
8. Radio and television scripts and tapes for both statewide and county use.

Educational and information techniques that can be used by State and Federal veterinarians, State departments of agriculture, State brucellosis committees, and State extension services to support the program include the following:

1. Regular reports of statewide progress can be made to State papers and wire services.

2. Plans of study can be arranged in cooperation with authorities in charge of curriculum in agricultural short courses, high schools, colleges, and veterinary colleges to include discussions of brucellosis, its prevention and eradication. Members of 4-H Clubs and Future Farmers of America could be asked to cooperate by including aspects of the brucellosis program in demonstrations and projects.

3. Home demonstration agents and rural women's organizations could be asked to include talks by brucellosis eradication program officials and other such discussions in their activities.

4. Set up a goal for statewide eradication of the disease. Experience has shown that adoption of a target date for eradication is one of the most helpful steps that can be taken. The National Brucellosis Committee has set as its goal a modified certified Brucellosis-free Nation by 1960.

5. Give adequate recognition for leadership in State, county, and community programs. The State committee can award certificates of appreciation and county committees make recommendations for recognition of local leadership.

THE JOB CAN BE DONE

Brucellosis can be eradicated. But the chance of reaching the goal of total eradication is only as good as the job being done in any herd, county, or State. An effective organization and a thorough educational program in every local area will make for rapid progress toward the goal of a modified certified brucellosis-free Nation by 1960.

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